

Items for Discussion with Congressman Bob Goodlatte

(Tuesday, August 26, 2003)

- **Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) Reauthorization:** The TANF Program was established in 1996 with funding levels through September 30, 2002. Congress failed to reauthorize TANF last year. The Program was extended pending reauthorization. The House passed a bill, HR 4, in February to reauthorize TANF with an increase in minimum work requirements to 40 hours, and a provision allowing up to 16 hours a week of education, job training or substance abuse treatment to count as work. The legislation also included increased childcare funding.

Delay with authorization now rests with the Senate. It is anticipated that the reauthorization will define a broader service population without additional administrative support. There is also some discussion about reducing the availability of transitional Medicaid. We should advocate for the financial resources to serve the broader population and maintenance of transitional Medicaid.

- **Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG):** This is the primary federal child care program. It was expanded as a part of the 1996 TANF legislation and is up for reauthorization along with TANF. This program is critical to long term self-sufficiency of welfare recipients. There has been some discussion about tightening eligibility and reducing financial resources.
- **Medicaid:** There is discussion at the federal level about capping Medicaid and making it a block grant to the States with greater discretion and fewer dollars. Medicaid is entitlement, so depending upon the amount of State discretion, capping it could cost the States millions. Reduction in funding and eligibility for Medicaid could create significant gaps in service for our citizens, gaps that would fall to local government to fill.
- **Workforce Investment Act:** The City supports continued funding at current levels for the Workforce Investment Act.
- **Homeland Security:** The amount and timeliness of Homeland Security funding coming directly too first responders. So far, we have received only \$57,000 since September 11, 2001, although we have been told more is on that way.

The awarding of federal Homeland Security monies to the states results in state government "skimming off" substantial amounts for state projects. Because of the state budget crisis, Homeland Security funding is, in my opinion, being used to supplant normal state funding methods. This means

that this money is not available for the actual first responders, who work for local governments.

- **Use of Military Reserve Units and the Strain on Local Police and Fire/EMS Departments:** The continued call-up of military reserve units puts a significant strain on local police and fire agencies. For example, the LPD has had two officers called up to serve as prison guards at the Cuban detention center for over a year. Is this the best use of these trained officers? There should be some method to evaluate where their training and experience would do the most good. No such method exists today. PD's and Fire Departments are at the mercy of military decisions.
- **Social Security Building:** The Social Security Building at Miller Park will soon be surplus property. The City is interested in this building for offices for the Department of Parks and Recreation. The City asks that you support the donation of this property to the City by the General Services Administration.
- **Combined Sewer Overflow Program:** Although all sources of federal funding (for CSO work) are welcome and appreciated, increased VA/HUD funding is of greatest benefit because the City has more flexibility in the use of this money compared to the WRDA money. Changes in guidelines to make grants 100% (verses 55/45) would be the greatest gain for the City. Based on recent surveys, Lynchburg and Richmond continue to have the highest sewer rates in the Commonwealth.

Increased federal funding is critical because at the current reduced funding levels, it will take several decades to complete the program, exposing the City to an ever-increasing risk of federal or citizen suit enforcement.

- **James River Heritage Trail:**
The City seeks support of grant funding for implementation of the regional greenway and blueway plan. Reauthorization of the TEA-21 funding is essential for localities to develop greenway systems.
- **EPA Brownfield Funding:**
Localities in Virginia have not been successful in obtaining Brownfield funding through EPA grants. The Brownfield funding is critical for the development of properties adjacent to City stadium and in the downtown area. The City seeks support for continued funding of Brownfield grants with more emphasis placed on cleanup projects and a streamlined approach to the grant process. The City has requested, but not received, specific information from EPA, Region 3 regarding the requirements for submittal of a successful grant application.
- **TEA 21 Reauthorization:** When the Federal Transportation funding legislation is considered, the City seeks increased overall funding levels to address critical infrastructure deficiencies, increased flexibility to make sure that available funding can be used where it is needed most, and a streamlining of the regulatory and project delivery processes so that projects can be completed in an effective and efficient manner.

- **Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) Changes:** The City supports Department of Labor efforts to update and simplify the Fair Labor Standards Act.
- **Cable Television Deregulation:** Cable TV companies can and do raise rates at will, especially in markets like Lynchburg with only one cable TV provider. It is the number one cable TV complaint of citizens. The Telecommunications Act of 1996 (and others) intended to spur competition, but it has not happened in smaller or mid-sized markets. More must be done to encourage competition; otherwise, limits need to be put in place to control cable TV rate increases.